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ABSTRACT

Four Title I schoolwide programs in the Austin Independent School District (Texas) at the elementary school level were selected for inclusion in a Title I Best Practices review of schoolwide programs. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 reauthorized Title I, the Federal Government's major compensatory education initiative, and authorized the use of Title I funds to upgrade the entire educational program at a school. Schools were selected for the review based on overall student achievement and continuous gains in achievement from 1992-93 to 1994-95. Interviews with principals at the four schools, some designated teachers, and a few parents were used to study the reasons these schools have been successful. At each Best Practices School staff and administration are using site-based management to make effective instructional program decisions that are reflected in the Campus Improvement Plans. Parents are involved in varying degrees as well. At each of the schools staff and administration have implemented some form of self-evaluation. All students at these schools are expected to achieve at high levels, and there are high expectations for teachers as well. There are few pull-out programs, but those that are in place have been evaluated and found to be effective. Common factors across the Best Practices schools are strong leadership and a team-like approach. These appear to be among the most important factors for school success. Appendixes present the principal, teacher, and parent questionnaires, and give demographic and achievement data by school. (SLD)

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Title I Best Practices Review 1995-96

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Austin Independent School District
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TITLE I: Best Practices Review, 1995-96
Executive Summary

Austin Independent School District
Department of Performance Audit and Evaluation

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Overview

Four Title I schoolwide programs, at the elementary school level, were selected for inclusion in a Title I Best Practices Review of schoolwide programs in AISD. Schools were selected based on overall student achievement and continuous gains in student achievement from 1992-93 to 1994-95. The four schools selected were Barrington, T.A. Brown, Sanchez, and Zavala.

The Review was carried out to explore and delineate practices at the selected Title I schoolwide programs, and to share this information with staff of other AISD schools. We hope that the best practices information will be helpful in improving achievement for all students at Title I schools, as well as for students throughout the district.

Methodology

At each school, the principal and principal-selected teachers were interviewed by evaluation staff. At some schools, a parent was interviewed also. Results of interviews were compiled for each campus and similar findings across schools were delineated. Findings are presented, first, in a summary for each school and then in a summary across all four schools.

Major Findings

At each Best Practices School, staff and administration are using site-based management to make effective instructional program decisions that are reflected in the Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs). Staff and administration are extensively involved in the decision-making process. Parents are involved in varying degrees as well.

At each of these schools, staff and administration have implemented some form of self-evaluation. Most are utilizing TAAS practice exams, and some are entering the results into a database at the campus level. Staff are able to subsequently use the database for analyses of results by individual student, by classroom, by grade, or by school.

All students at these campuses are expected to achieve at high levels. There are high expectations for teachers on these campuses as well. Innovative teaching strategies are used by the teachers and are encouraged and supported by the principals. Instructional strategies generally target all students at a campus, at a grade level, or in a classroom. There are very few pull-out programs. As mandated by the Title I reauthorized regulations, the pull-out programs that are in place (e.g., Reading Recovery) have been found to be effective by previous research.

At these schools, professional development is valued by staff and administration. Principals support staff development by allowing for additional staff development time over the district allotment.

Two common factors across the Best Practices Schools are strong leadership and a team-like approach. Although more research is needed to reach a conclusion, it appears that these are the most important factors for school success.

Budget Implications

Title I funds varied according to percentage of low-income students on a campus, and local funds varied according to number of students on a campus. Additionally, all Best Practices Schools brought in funds through grants and other outside sources. Although amount of total funding varied by school, student achievement improved at all Best Practices Schools.

Recommendations

1. Fully utilize the site based management model.
2. Implement and make extended use of self-evaluation, at the campus, grade, and classroom levels.
3. Insure that CIP goals reflect results of self-evaluation.
4. Insure that staff development reflects goals in the CIP.
5. Increase the use of and training in research-based, innovative instructional strategies.
6. Expect all students to achieve at high levels.
7. Have a strong leader and work as a team.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES v

INTRODUCTION 1

SELECTION OF BEST PRACTICES SCHOOL 3
A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCHOOLS 5
Survey Methodology 7

SCHOOL REPORTS 9

BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY 11
School Organization 11
Special Programs and Teaching Strategies 12
School Climate 12
Professional Development and Support 13
Parent and Community Involvement 13
Student Achievement 13
T. A. BROWN ELEMENTARY 15
School Climate 15
Program Decisions 16
Professional Development and Support 16
Parental Involvement 16
Special Programs and Teaching Strategies 17
Student Achievement 17
SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY 19
Teaching Strategies 19
School Climate 20
Parent Involvement 20
Professional Growth 20
Achievement 21
ZAVALA ELEMENTARY 23
Special Programs and Teaching Strategies 24
Program Decisions 24
School Climate 25
Student Awards, Activities, and Leadership Opportunities 25
Parent and Community Involvement 25
Professional Development 25
Student Achievement 26
CONCLUSIONS 27
COMMON THREADS 29
Special Programs and Teaching Strategies 29
School Climate 29
School Organization 30
Parent and Community Involvement 30
Professional Growth 31
Factors Affecting Improved Student Achievement 31
Advice to Title I Teachers 31
Advice to Title I Principals 31

SUMMARY 33

APPENDICES **35**

APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL, TEACHER, AND PARENT SURVEYS 37
Best Practices Questionnaire: Principal 39
Best Practices Questionnaire: Teacher 40
Best Practices Questionnaire: Parent 41
APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND ACHIEVEMENT DATA BY SCHOOL 43
BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY 45
T.A. BROWN ELEMENTARY 46
SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY 47
ZAVALA ELEMENTARY 48

RFFERENCE LIST **49**

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Achievement Data by School; 1993-94 and 1994-95 4
Table 2: School Demographics; 1995-96 5
Table 3: Demographics by School; 1990-91 and 1995-96 6
Table 4: Number of Interview Participants by Campus 8
Table 5: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-95, for Barrington, AISD, and Texas 11
Table 6: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995, for T.A. Brown, AISD, and Texas 15
Table 7: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995 for Sanchez, AISD, and Texas 19
Table 8: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995 for Zavala, AISD, and Texas 23
Table 9: Barrington Demographics; 1993-94 through 1995-96 45
Table 10: Student Achievement at Barrington; 1993-94 through 1994-95 45
Table 11: T.A. Brown Elementary Demographics; 1993-94 through 1995-96 46
Table 12: Student Achievement at T.A. Brown; 1993-94 through 1994-95 46
Table 13: Demographics for Sanchez Elementary; 1993-94 through 1995-96 47
Table 14: Student Achievement at Sanchez; 1993-94 and 1994-95 47
Table 15: Demographics for Zavala Elementary; 1993-94 through 1995-96 48
Table 16: Student Achievement at Zavala; 1993-94 and 1994-95 48

INTRODUCTION

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 reauthorized Title I. These new federal regulations allow an eligible school to become a Title I schoolwide program. A Title I schoolwide program may use Title I funds in combination with other Federal, State and local funds in order to upgrade the entire educational program at the school. For the 1995-96 school year, a school became eligible, and could become a schoolwide program if District funding permitted, if 60% or more of the children enrolled in the school came from low-income families. Currently, 37 schools in AISD are Title I schoolwide programs. Many of these schools have been schoolwide programs for several years. In 1994-95, there were 29 Chapter I schoolwide programs and 4 non-schoolwide programs in AISD.

A Best Practices Review of Title I schoolwide programs was carried out to explore practices at selected Title I schools. Schools at which students have made continuous gains in achievement or maintained high levels of achievement since the 1993-94 school year were selected. Four Title I schools were selected for inclusion in the Best Practices Review; the four schools were Barrington, T.A. Brown, Sanchez, and Zavala. The purpose of the review was to gather information about practices at these schools in order to share the information with staff of other Title I schools

At each school, the principal and teachers (across grade levels) were interviewed by evaluation staff. At some schools a parent was interviewed as well. Results of these interviews are presented in summaries for individual schools, and similar findings across schools are presented in an overview of findings for all four schools.

SELECTION OF BEST PRACTICES SCHOOL

In the reauthorized Title I program, the state accountability criteria serve as the federal evaluation criteria. In Texas the state accountability criteria include: percent of students passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test (TAAS), attendance rate, and for middle schools and high schools, annual dropout rate. In the 1995-96 school year, at least 30% of all students at a campus must pass each section of the TAAS test, including reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and writing in grades 4 and 8. A student who takes the TAAS test at any school in the district is included in the percentage passing TAAS for the school that the student is enrolled in at the time of the October count. Also, at least 30% of students in each disaggregated group must pass TAAS. The disaggregated groups are: African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged. In the 1994-95 school year, 25% of students in all groups had to pass TAAS in all subject areas. In the 1993-94 school year, 25% of students at a campus had to pass TAAS in all subject areas. Because of this focus on TAAS results for accountability at the Federal and State levels, TAAS data were used for selection of the Best Practices Schools.

TAAS results for the 1992-93 school year through the 1994-95 school year were reviewed. Percentages of students passing TAAS Reading, Mathematics, Writing, and All Tests Taken were compared for all of the Title I schools. The schools' TAAS data were examined for consistently high achievement and for gains over time. Results indicated that four schools stood out from the rest: Barrington, Brown, Sanchez, and Zavala. TAAS data for these four schools, for 1993-94 and 1994-95, are presented in Table 1. TAAS data for

1992-93 are not presented in the table because 1992-93 was a transition year for TAAS administration. In 1992-93, Grades 3, 7, and 11 were tested in the Fall; however, administration time was shifted from Fall to Spring for grades 4, 8, and 10. Thus, the transition year data are not directly comparable to TAAS data for later years.

Even though data are not directly comparable, overall Barrington and Zavala showed strong and improving student achievement over the three year period, while Brown and Sanchez made significant improvement in 1994-95. Other Title I schools to be commended for student achievement in 1994-95 are Dawson, Houston, Walnut Creek, Wooldridge, and Wooten; at each of these schools, over 50% of all students, and over 50% of students in the disaggregated groups passed all subjects and all tests taken.

Table 1: Achievement Data by School;
1993-94 and 1994-95

Subject by School	1993-94	1994-95
Reading		
Barrington	78.5	73.8
Brown	65.2	71.3
Sanchez	58.7	77.6
Zavala	77.6	83.2
Mathematics		
Barrington	66.7	68.5
Brown	45.6	70.1
Sanchez	45.4	58.3
Zavala	67.9	68.1
Writing		
Barrington	75.5	89.6
Brown	61.3	87.1
Sanchez	82.4	82.9
Zavala	71.9	83.9
All Tests Taken		
Barrington	61.4	61.4
Brown	45.1	59.1
Sanchez	39.0	56.1
Zavala	58.0	61.0

A Closer Look at The Schools

The Best Practices Schools have many similarities, yet retain their individuality. More than 70% of the students at Barrington, Brown, Sanchez, and Zavala are from low-income families. Federal regulations mandate allocation of Title I funds to schools with 70% or more low-income students; therefore, these are all Title I schools. The percentage of low-income students varies from 74% at Barrington to 92% at Brown and Zavala.

While the ethnic makeup of the campuses reviewed in this study varies, the percentage of minority students ranges from 99% at Zavala to 74% at Barrington. Barrington is composed of an ethnic mix of students including, 43% Hispanic, 26% African American, 26% Anglo and Other, 4% Asian, and 1% Native American. The other schools included in the study have a predominately Hispanic enrollment. Demographics for 1995-96 for each of the schools are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: School Demographics; 1995-96

School	Barrington	Brown	Sanchez	Zavala
Ethnicity				
% Hispanic	43	73	96	86
% African-American.	26	16	1	13
% Asian	4	1	-	-
% Native American.	1	1	-	-
% Anglo/Other	26	10	3	1
% Low Income	74	92	88	92
% LEP	16	42	27	27
% At Risk	32	50	41	38
% Special Education	10	17	17	11

Note. Percentages are rounded; less than 1% is indicated by a dash (-).

The percentage of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is the highest at Brown (42%), followed by Sanchez and Zavala (27%), and Barrington (16%). Between one third and one half of all students at these schools are at risk of dropping out of school. The special education populations at the schools range from 10-17%.

Demographic data for the schools over the past five years (1990-91 through 1995-96) were reviewed to investigate the stability of these data over time. The longitudinal demographic data are presented in Table 3. The data in Table 3 reveal that the two schools in north Austin, Barrington and Brown, have experienced the greatest change in ethnic makeup over time. The ethnic makeup at Sanchez and Zavala, in east Austin, has remained more stable over time. The greatest increase in percentage of low-income students occurred at Brown (from 80% in 1990-91 to 92% in 1995-96). The percentage of low-income students actually decreased slightly at Zavala (from 95% in 1990-91 to 92% in 1995-96).

Table 3: Demographics by School;
1990-91 and 1995-96

Demographics	% 1990-91	% 1995-96
Barrington		
African-American	27	26
Hispanic	33	43
Other	40	31
Low Income	72	74
Total Enrollment	795	867
Brown		
African-American	19	16
Hispanic	54	73
Other	27	11
Low Income	80	92
Total Enrollment	541	569
Sanchez		
African-American	3	1
Hispanic	95	96
Other	2	3
Low Income	86	88
Total Enrollment	557	509
Zavala		
African-American	14	13
Hispanic	84	86
Other	2	1
Low Income	95	92
Total Enrollment	392	478

The student populations at Barrington, Brown, Sanchez, and Zavala are similar to student populations at all of the Austin ISD Title I schools. Many of the students at these schools come from educationally and economically disadvantaged situations. Historically, schools throughout the state with high percentages of minority and economically disadvantaged students have had lower percentages of students passing TAAS than other schools. The principals and teachers at these Title I campuses should be commended for bringing about change and helping to improve achievement for all of the students at their schools.

Survey Methodology

To investigate within school factors that may have lead to an increase in test scores, Title I and Title I Migrant evaluation staff designed and administered a series of interviews at the four schools selected. Interview forms are included in Appendix A. The interview questions covered the following areas:

Special Programs/Teaching Strategies

- Innovative or research-based programs
- Technology
- Grants or extra funding (Principal interview only)
- Program Decisions

Professional Growth/Professional Development

- Support for innovative instructional strategies
- Professional development
- Methods of self-improvement for teaching skills

School Climate or Atmosphere

- Description of climate or atmosphere
- Factors contributing to atmosphere or climate

Parent and Community Involvement

- Methods of increasing parental involvement
- Methods of increasing community involvement

Student Achievement

- Factors contributing to students achievement
- Advice for staff at other schools

At each school, the principal and at least three teachers who were selected by the principal were interviewed by evaluation staff. If requested by the principal, further interviews were performed. Teachers across grade levels were interviewed and at some schools a parent was interviewed as well. In Table 4, the number of interview participants by school is presented.

Table 4: Number of Interview Participants by Campus

School	Administrator	Teachers	Parents
Barrington	1	5	1
Brown	1	5	0
Sanchez	1	10	1
Zavala	1	3	1
Total	**4**	**23**	**3**

Results of the compilation of interview data for each school are presented in the following section. An overview of all four of the Best Practices Campuses is presented in the final section.

SCHOOL REPORTS

BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY

Barrington Elementary School, built in 1969 in north Austin, is rich in cultural diversity. The 1995-96 enrollment of 867 students is composed of 43% Hispanic, 26% African American, 26% Anglo/Other, 4% Asian, and 1% Native American Students.

Barrington became a Title I school in 1993. Currently, 74% of the students attending Barrington are from low-income families. The Title I funding for 1995-96 ($125,250) is being used for additional teachers' salaries and benefits, computer software, and intersession salaries. Barrington has received additional funding from grants including: TEA Parental Involvement Partnership with Austin Interfaith; Motorola Recycling Grant; Academic Excellence Awards in 1992-93 and 1993-94; Eisenhower Science and Math Grant; and the TEA Technology Grant.

Student achievement has been consistently strong at Barrington during the three year period (1992-93 through 1994-95) reviewed for this study. The 1994-95 TAAS results indicated that 61% of students at Barrington passed all TAAS tests taken. Along with Zavala, Barrington had the highest overall passing rate of Title I schools. Barrington's passing rate was higher than the 1994-95 passing rate for AISD and for Texas. The TAAS passing rates by subject for Barrington were: Reading 73.8%, Mathematics 68.5%, and Writing 89.6%. These results show either gains or consistency from 1993-94 in the subject areas of mathematics, writing, and overall percent passing TAAS. Table 5 shows the percent passing TAAS tests by subject area for Barrington, for AISD, and for Texas in 1994-95.

Table 5: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-95, for Barrington, AISD, and Texas

	Barrington	AISD	Texas
Writing	89.6	78.0	82.0
Reading	73.8	73.4	65.9
Mathematics	68.5	59.2	78.4
All Tests Taken	61.4	54.4	60.7

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Barrington used the Accelerated Schools model in restructuring the school. Ruth Bailey, Barrington's principal, shared the following statements describing the philosophy of this model:

- The schools we want for children in at-risk situations should be the same schools that we want for our own children.
- Powerful learning experiences are provided for all children through the integration of curriculum, instruction, and organization.
- Accelerated school communities share a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes.

The principal and teachers who were interviewed at Barrington were very supportive of these beliefs. The planning process on the campus involves three groups called cadres that specialize in the planning for parental involvement, social skills, and achievement. All faculty members are a part of one of the cadres. Ideas begin in the cadres, then, are presented to the steering committee advisory group, and, finally, are taken to the whole faculty. All faculty members must agree on the change before it is approved. Teachers said that they feel empowered to be part of the process and can, therefore, support the decisions that are made.

Special Programs and Teaching Strategies

Many special programs are utilized in addition to the standard curriculum. One major program change has been the realignment of the curriculum with the TAAS objectives. An innovative nine-week reporting system was developed by Barrington to assess classroom performance and progress on TAAS objectives. Results from data analyses at the classroom, grade, and school levels are utilized to monitor achievement. In addition, intervention strategies are in place for at-risk students and teaching strategies have been adjusted to enhance learning. For example, teachers share ideas and work together on grade level teams and there is a bilingual teacher and ESL teacher at each grade level.

Barrington began a year-round school program in 1995-96. In this program, the school year revolves around an approximate 60/20 (60 days in school and 20 days off) schedule. The breaks between the 60 day sessions are called intersessions. Students needing additional learning time are provided supplementary instruction during these intersessions.

Research-based programs, such as Reading Recovery, Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS), Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) lab, Content Mastery, and Extended Day are in place at Barrington. Innovative programs include a Portfolio Assessment Pilot (students present portfolios to a committee that evaluates and asks questions), a broadcasting system run by students, a schoolwide Pony Express Post Office run by second graders, Young Scientists (a class for grade 6 students with an emphasis in science), a schoolwide reading program, a natural science lab, and many others.

The importance of technology is modeled by the teachers for the students by using computer software to complete nine-week TAAS assessments. There is a computer in each classroom, and all students use computers in the CCC lab each week. Discover English software is available for ESL students. Advanced Reader Pro software is used in the library computers for students to list books they have read during the year. A cooperative program with Dairy Queen rewards students for participation in the schoolwide reading program.

School Climate

Teachers described the school climate at Barrington as very supportive and positive. They described Barrington as being like a family or a team. Teachers also stated that the principal is always open to their ideas. The parent who was interviewed confirmed the teacher reports of the positive atmosphere at Barrington and included that staff, students, and parents are "constantly doing things." Teachers said that factors contributing to the school climate include working together on grade level teams, sharing materials and ideas, and being supported by the principal. Teachers also included, as a major contributing factor, an openness on the part of the principal and the entire staff.

Professional Development and Support

Barrington staff and administration support extensive professional development. Teachers attend workshops and inservice training to learn more about Accelerated Schools, Powerful Learning, Cooperative Learning, Conflict Resolution, and other topics of interest. Teachers stated that administrative support and respect have empowered them to improve student achievement. Ruth Bailey believes that in addition to monitoring achievement, it is important to "make everyone a leader." Teachers are given recognition and awards in support of their efforts. During the school year, each teacher gets an opportunity to go out to lunch with teachers from other grade levels.

Parent and Community Involvement

Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged at Barrington. The faculty worked with the PTA this year to increase membership from 62 to 250. Teachers send take-home folders for each child with a calendar of upcoming events, notes, and papers each week. Weekly newsletters inform parents about what is being studied that week and other important information. Two parent-teacher conferences are held each year, with the second one led by the student.

Parents and students were invited to a visitation day before school started to see the classroom and meet the teacher. Parents are encouraged to attend assemblies at the end of each nine-week period that recognize students for achievement in academics, attendance, and behavior. Parent training meetings were offered in the evening throughout the year for every grade level. Grade 3 parents were required to attend a meeting to learn about the TAAS test. Currently, parents and faculty are working together to organize a Barrington 4-H Club.

In 1995-96, Barrington became an Austin Interfaith Alliance School. The school has received an Interfaith grant for family literacy beginning with a door-to-door Walk for Success to be held next year. Other collaborations with the community include the following: Austin Adopt-a-School partners, a six-week Junior Achievement program for pre-K through grade 6 students, a recycling project with Motorola, and other mentors and volunteers. Barrington earned the Austin Chamber of Commerce Quality Schools Award in 1994-95 for demonstrating use of quality principles.

Student Achievement

The principal and teachers agreed that many factors have affected Barrington students' achievement gains. Most of the faculty mentioned that aligning curriculum with TAAS objectives and changing teaching strategies has helped them focus on what students should learn. Also, the nine-week reporting system with the TAAS assessment has helped teachers monitor achievement. This monitoring has been a valuable tool that has allowed for immediate intervention with students who need help.

The principal and teachers were asked what advice they would give to principals or teachers at other Title I schools on improving student achievement. The principal's advice included tips for organization such as: Accept a model for restructuring, believe in the model, monitor success, and use data wisely.

Teachers had a wealth of suggestions to enhance the learning environment. A positive attitude combined with high expectations for all students were the main suggestions for improving student achievement. Barrington teachers recommended that teachers participate in professional development and implement what they learn in their classrooms. Also, the teachers said that learning should be active and fun with real-life experiences. Finally, Barrington teachers stated that their unity of purpose of improving student achievement reinforced with lots of assessment encourages improved student achievement. Barrington teachers have realigned the curriculum with TAAS objectives and feel that TAAS practice is essential to ensure that students are prepared to take the TAAS test. Teachers said that it is important to believe in your students and expect 100% from them.

A visit to Barrington reveals the depth of commitment of the faculty to improving student achievement. Barrington's staff meet the special challenges of a school that has a majority of low-income students (74% in 1995-96) and a high mobility rate (48.4% in 1994-95), with a positive attitude. It is to the credit of Principal Ruth Bailey and the staff and parents at Barrington that they are maintaining a campus alive with new ideas and high expectations.

T. A. BROWN ELEMENTARY

T. A. Brown Elementary School is located in north Austin; it was established in 1957. The student population of 569 is 73% Hispanic, 16% African American, and 11% Anglo/Other. Currently, 92% of students at T.A. Brown are from low-income families. The 1995-96 Title I allocation for T.A. Brown was $253,000. T. A. Brown received additional funds and services during the 1995-96 school year through: a grant from Austin Interfaith for an after-school program, a grant from KLRU for an early literacy program, a Southwestern Bell literacy grant, a Bilingual Education Student Organization Grant that matched funds for Spanish books, and a City of Austin grant for medical and dental services.

T. A. Brown was honored by TEA for the 1994-95 academic performance of Title I students on TAAS, and was included in this Best Practices Review based on gains in TAAS scores for all students over the last three years. As shown in Table 6, the percentage of students passing TAAS in 1994-95 was 59.1 for all tests taken, 70.1 for mathematics, 71.3 for reading, and 87.1 for writing. Comparison data for the District and for the State are presented as well.

Table 6: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995, for T.A. Brown, AISD, and Texas

	T.A. Brown	AISD	Texas
Writing	87.1	78.0	82.0
Reading	71.3	73.4	65.9
Mathematics	70.1	59.2	78.4
All Tests Taken	59.1	54.4	60.7

SCHOOL CLIMATE

The staff of T.A. Brown worked extremely hard last year in order to improve student achievement. The common goal and focus reported by all staff members for the 1995-96 school year was to maintain and to continue to improve student achievement. Staff reported that, because their students made great gains last year, they feel considerable pressure for their students to continue to do well this year. However, staff report that the principal is very supportive and that much of the pressure is self-imposed. Teachers report that although it gets stressful at times, school climate is generally positive. There is a feeling of teamwork at each grade level and a move towards increasing teamwork across grade levels. However, time constraints make teaming across grade levels difficult. In order to encourage collaboration and a feeling of community, newer teachers are mentored by more experienced teachers and grade teams meet once a week. Teachers report that other factors influence school climate, as well. They believe that the principal is open with them and trusts their judgment. Also, teachers share ideas and materials with each other, are supportive of one another, and have good relationships, particularly among grade levels. To improve school

climate, community building activities, such as potluck dinners, are carried out as time permits.

PROGRAM DECISIONS

Program decisions at T.A. Brown are made by the campus leadership team (CLT) with input from the principal and staff. The CLT is made up of grade team leaders, and members of the CLT are elected for a two year term. Issues are taken to the CLT where discussion and planning occur; results of the CLT meetings are presented to the entire staff at weekly school wide staff meetings. Staff consensus is the goal. Decisions made by the CLT are sometimes voted on by the entire staff, but often are accepted without a vote because staff feel that they have input throughout the process. Teachers report feeling involved in the decision making process. For example, there is a concern bucket at the school where teachers can write down issues for discussion at the CLT. Also, teachers feel represented by their team leader on the CLT.

Program decisions result from monitoring the campus improvement plan (CIP), as well. The CIP is monitored during the year, and the monitoring can lead to program decisions such as updating the CIP, if necessary.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Teachers are given professional freedom in their classroom. For example, teachers can use innovative strategies if they monitor these strategies and find them to be effective. Teachers usually get classroom materials that they request, and the principal is supportive of fund-raisers for classroom teachers (they can have two each year). As an extension of professional freedom, teachers personal needs are respected, as well. For example, there is flexibility for teachers to attend to personal business, if necessary, and during the month of December, teachers are allowed to leave by 3:00 p.m. This flexibility is greatly appreciated by the teachers; they report feeling trusted and supported by their principal.

Professional development is encouraged and supported. Teachers receive an average of 75 hours of professional development. Staff at T.A. Brown have had Early Literacy training (ELIC), Project Read training, and Gifted and Talented training. Money is available for each teacher to attend workshops, etc. of their choosing. Master teachers do in-house staff development and instructors/trainers are brought in for professional development on the campus as well.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement at T.A. Brown is improving with the addition of a Parent Training Specialist (PTS) to the staff. The PTS has additional time that the teachers do not have to spend interacting with the parents. Teachers report that the PTS has helped to increase the comfort level of parents visiting the school. Teachers support this effort by sending communications and materials home to the parents and by holding parent conferences. Parents are encouraged to work with students on academics as well as to be involved in fund-raising etc. T.A. Brown has strong community support. The school has "great adopters" that are used as pen pals with the students and for tutoring and mentoring the students, etc.

Special Programs and Teaching Strategies

Some special teaching strategies and approaches used at T.A. Brown include the movement of a teacher to the next grade level along with her or his students. Teachers report that this strategy works well because they already know their students' needs and have already established a relationship with their students' parents. The students know their teacher's expectations as well, and the class gets a head start on the next school year. Teachers at T.A. Brown report using the ELIC model, with some adjustments, to fit their own students' needs. Teachers also report using exercises to make math and reading more fun, such as Making Math Memorable, Box It or Bag It Mathematics, Math Our Way, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), and journal writing.

T.A. Brown has two computer labs and a few classroom computers. The computer labs, rather than classroom computers, are the focus of technology use. Students go to one computer lab to work on writing; the other lab is for academic games. Most students go to each lab once a week. A computer lab instructor modeled the use of technology for teachers in previous years and in 1995-96 teachers were expected to take over the lab instructor function. Funds that were used in previous years to pay for a lab instructor are being used this year to pay for a curriculum specialist. The curriculum specialist supports and works with teachers on the specific needs of their students.

Several opportunities for extracurricular activities and for student leadership exist at T.A. Brown. Students are offered after-school activities twice a week, they can participate in peer reading, where older students read to younger students and a student can be a member of the Super Bobcats, an honor club, if he or she consistently exhibits good behavior.

Student Achievement

Student achievement is encouraged by end of the year awards and by award assemblies throughout the year. Awards are given for highest achievement as well as for most improved achievement. Brown takes a team approach towards the TAAS test; students attend TAAS pep rallies. Awards are also given for behavior and attendance. Attendance is monitored by the Parent Training Specialist (PTS) who calls or visits the home if a student is absent.

Suggestions for improving student achievement made by teachers at T.A. Brown include: starting with the ELIC model or the Brian Cambourne model, using Frameworks, using natural learning (which is a form of immersion), using interesting books such as Rigby and Wright, incorporating TAAS Objectives into curriculum, stressing math and language arts at early grades, immersing students in reading and writing even in kindergarten, and modeling reading and problem solving behavior for students.

Several teachers suggested using a mix and match approach, for example, know your kids and what they need, and adjust your style accordingly. Learn all you can at workshops, and use what will work for your personality and for the personalities and needs of your students. Pinpoint problem areas and weaknesses, but also build on strengths of students. If something is not working, adjust your strategy.

Leticia Hinojosa, the principal at T.A. Brown, attributes improved student achievement to hard work on everyone's part, to lots of staff development, to increased parental involvement, to high expectations for students in academics as well as in behavior,

and to an exceptional team of teachers. Ms. Hinojosa's advice to principals of other Title I schools to help their students achieve similar success includes the following: Monitor student achievement, have high standards and have a measuring stick; take the pressure off teachers but encourage them to do their best; give teachers resources for professional development (such as money and time off for workshops); give teachers professional freedom and trust and encourage them; and get the community involved. Ms. Hinojosa's closing statement sums up the spirit of T.A. Brown; "Everyone work together, this is a hard job."

SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Established in 1976, Sanchez Elementary School is home to over 500 students and over 60 staff members with a student composition of 96% Hispanic, 2% African American and 2% Anglo during the 1994-95 school year. Low-income students comprise 91% of students and 27% are LEP eligible. Sanchez prides itself on the unique relationship it has with the community surrounding the school. Sanchez' "open door policy" with parents and other community members has created an atmosphere in which all members of the community work together for their children's education. It is perhaps for these reasons that Sanchez' TAAS scores are higher than District and State percentages in both reading and writing, and that teacher transfers into the school are much greater than transfers out of the school. Sanchez was included in the Title I Best Practices Review for overall high student achievement and gains in student achievement. TAAS percentages for the 1994-95 school year are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995 for Sanchez, AISD, and Texas

	Sanchez	AISD	Texas
Writing	82.9	78.0	82.0
Reading	75.2	73.4	65.9
Mathematics	58.3	59.2	78.4
All Tests Taken	56.1	54.4	60.7

Sanchez received $231,000 in Title I funds during the 1995-96 school year. In addition to Title I, Sanchez receives moneys from a Dual Language grant which will continue for the next five years, Youth Charter Funds which will continue for the next two years, year-round school funds, and moneys from the city to fund after-school clubs. In addition to these funds, Sanchez receives help from student teachers, Americorps' volunteers, and numerous parent volunteers. The District also provides additional aid to all Sanchez students who qualify. Programs offered by the District include Title I, Title I Migrant, Bilingual, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Staff at Sanchez use a variety of teaching methods to benefit students. Sanchez teachers reported that integrating computers into the curriculum and offering hands-on activities in math and science were helpful strategies. Students are included in teaching strategies as well. For example, students are asked for their input on classroom management and intersession academy topics.

The principal and teachers agreed that high expectations of students and faculty are a key component to academic success. Sanchez teachers reported that using mixed age classes

(K-1), acknowledging different learning styles of students, adopting a whole language/child centered approach, and maintaining a low turnover rate for their faculty were important for their students' success.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Faculty at Sanchez describe their campus as a positive and nurturing place for students to learn and a campus with a strong sense of community identity. Teachers report giving a lot of time to their students and responding to students in a positive manner. Students know the high expectations faculty hold for them and understand that they are at Sanchez to learn. Teachers report that their campus has an administration that keeps them well informed through good communication and that everyone is cooperative and willing to work extremely hard to meet the needs of their students. The faculty is responsive to the needs of the parents and community and report that the school and community, as a whole, feel like a family. Sanchez also sponsors many special events for the entire community. The strong leadership by Sanchez' principal, Ed Leo, was also cited as important for a positive school climate.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Sanchez maintains active school-home contact with parents both formally, through teacher conferences and a strong parent outreach program, and informally, by speaking to parents as they pick-up or drop-off their children at school. Faculty and administration make themselves available to parents and parents know that, "the door is always open." Special events are structured to draw parent participation. Faculty encourage parents to be involved as well. Parents volunteer in many areas at Sanchez including the lunchroom, library, classroom, and office. Parents also volunteer as helping teachers and teach several after-school classes. Parents are invited to visit classrooms, there is written contact nightly about their child's progress, and student work is sent home for the entire family to view. A weekly flier is sent home to keep parents informed of all of the schools' activities. Teachers cite that sending notes home in the language of the household helps ensure communication between teachers and parents. As participating members of the CAC, parents help make school decisions that affect the school community. Ed Leo, Sanchez' principal, gives parents the opportunity to meet and talk with him at the "Principal's Breakfast." Parents are also asked to attend parent training classes such as computer and math workshops. Teachers at Sanchez make a great effort to have open communication with parents from the beginning of, and throughout, the school year.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Teachers at Sanchez improve their teaching skills by participation in workshops, faculty meetings, team teaching, support groups, and through input from fellow teachers. The entire faculty has been trained in Project Read and Scientific Spelling, and many teachers have also participated in AIMS training workshops. Training at State and local levels is supplemented with problem-solving sessions with supervisors and colleagues. The support of Ed Leo was reported as vital to initiating research and implementing innovative teaching

strategies. Teachers also reported that their administration provides them with necessary materials, training, and technology.

ACHIEVEMENT

The continued connection to the school through the year-round school schedule is believed to enhance the achievement of Sanchez students. Parents and faculty believe that the academy offered during intersessions is an important component in producing achievement gains. Faculty reported teacher commitment, support, high expectations for students and faculty, and community and parent support for the teachers and principal as vital for improving student achievement. Teachers believe that Sanchez offers valuable, stimulating activities and experiments that illuminate the concepts being taught, and that students at Sanchez are being taught life-long skills. Administrative support for the discipline needed to maintain an effective learning environment is also seen as vital.

Overall, faculty at Sanchez believe that their high visibility at the school and in the community and their constant support for students, parents, and the community are qualities from which other schools would benefit. Teachers recommended getting to know students well, such as pinpointing the student's learning style or finding out what the student's home environment is like and how the environment may impact learning. Teachers also recommend making students responsible for their own learning. Finally, administrative support of teachers and parents, and working as a team (including parents) were seen as extremely beneficial for the success of the school.

ZAVALA ELEMENTARY

Zavala Elementary School was established and built on three acres of land in east Austin in 1936. The neighborhood is a well-established Hispanic community. The current 1995-96 enrollment figures of 478 students show that 86% are Hispanic, 13% are African American, and 1% are Anglo or Other. These demographics have not exhibited any noticeable variation in the past five years. The interviews and other data sources show that Zavala is a part of the community; Zavala has an after-school instructional program with paid staff and volunteers, an after-school care program, forty-four community partners, and six grant benefactors.

Zavala was allocated $202,000 in Title I funds in 1995-96. In addition to these funds, Zavala received extra funding through grants including the following: Texas Education Agency staff development grant in the amount of $25,000; Southwest Labs staff development grant for $82,000; National Science Foundation grant for the sixth grade science lab in the amount of $94,000; Austin Community Foundation grant for the library for $15,000; City of Austin After-School Enrichment Program grant for $30,000; and a two year grant from Philadelphia for $300,000, which covers the Youth Charter Program operations. Approximately $28,000 was provided for schoolwide activities by Adopt-A-School participants.

Review of Zavala's achievement records and profiles show test scores rising steadily over the three years reviewed for this study. Table 8 shows the percentage of Zavala students who passed the TAAS in 1994-95 along with comparison data for the District and the State.

Table 8: Percent of Students Passing TAAS Tests in 1994-1995 for Zavala, AISD, and Texas

	Zavala	AISD	Texas
Writing	83.2	78.0	82.0
Reading	83.9	73.4	65.9
Mathematics	68.1	59.2	78.4
All Tests Taken	61.0	54.4	60.7

Zavala was selected for the 1995-96 Best Practices Review because of their high test scores. Zavala and Barrington were the Title I schools with the highest percentage of students passing all tests taken (61%) on the 1995 TAAS, surpassing the State average of 60.7%.

To gather data for the Title I Best Practices Review, Title I and Title I Migrant staff conducted interviews with the principal of Zavala, four teachers, a parent, and the PTA president. The instructional staff who were interviewed consisted of a pre-K, first, fourth and fifth grade teacher.

Special Programs and Teaching Strategies

The teachers at Zavala indicated that they use the following special programs to enhance the standard curriculum: Dual Language System, AISD's Developmental Learning Materials, First Impression, AISD's Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, and, on the fourth grade level, Scholastic for Spanish Students Reading Program and Scott Foreman Spanish Mathematics. Cooperative Learning was the special teaching strategy most often mentioned by the teachers as being used at Zavala.

The administrators and staff of Zavala have implemented many innovative programs. The principal, Al Mindiz-Melton, stated that the standard curriculum is a special program in itself. Two years ago the school decided to adopt the Open Court Series as its standard curriculum by securing a waiver from the Texas Education Agency. The staff also decided to keep students in grades 1-2 and grades 3-4 with the same teacher for two years. The principal listed Reading Recovery, HOSTS, and the after-school program that allows regular staff, parents, and community members either to volunteer or to receive $15 per hour for instructional services as special programs at Zavala.

Teaching strategies used at Zavala include Cooperative Learning, team teaching, teacher mentoring, and some summer 1996 activities that will involve all teachers' participation in the New Jersey Writing Project. Currently, 97% of the teachers are English as a Second Language (ESL) certified and the principal reports that remaining school staff will become ESL certified as well.

The principal indicated that all classrooms, including pre-K, have at least one computer. There are also two computer labs on site and one mini science lab for sixth graders. The teachers used technology in various ways. For example, first grade teachers use the computers for mathematics classes only, while fourth grade students go to the lab for language arts and science. Fourth graders also use classroom computers after school to do homework. Fifth grade students use the computers in the lab to write reports.

Program Decisions

The teachers and the principal referred to program decisions as multiple function activities dependent upon the population involved. For example, if the decision concerns the whole campus, the campus leadership team will identify the concern. Next, the teacher task force provides a solution or solutions for consideration during a campuswide meeting. The campus may accept the teacher task force's solution/s or send the task force back to the drawing board. If the decision concerns a single grade level or classroom it is considered a local concern. Decisions for local concerns are reached at grade level meetings or during weekly faculty meetings.

Faculty Concern Meetings take place two to three times per year and are the teachers' forums for expressing concerns about school matters. The principal said that he does not attend these meetings but receives valuable feedback from the teachers after the meetings. The teachers spoke of special interest teams formed during faculty meetings when teachers have a desire to work on a specific project. TAAS Writing improvement is an example of a specific project that a special interest team was formed to pursue.

School Climate

When asked to describe the school's climate or atmosphere, the teachers and the parent used adjectives such as excellent, great, good, positive, outgoing, warm, and a great place to work and learn. Teachers listed factors such as high morale, focused goals and expectations, high expectation for campuswide success, open communication, great initiative and follow up, respect for each other's ideas, and good team or grade-level cooperation as factors that contribute to the school climate. The parent cited continuity between grade levels, good administrative support, and parent perception of the school as a safe place as factors that contribute to the climate at Zavala.

Student Awards, Activities, and Leadership Opportunities

The principal said that, at Zavala, rewards for high student achievement and attendance efforts were handled through honor assemblies, personal student rewards, and home visits. The principal indicated that such programs as Zavala's After School Enrichment program sponsored by the City of Austin provide students with extra-curricular activities. This program also provided staff, parents, and community members an opportunity to provide instructional services on a volunteer or paid basis.

The Youth Charter Program, operating on a two year grant from Philadelphia, offers extra-curricular and leadership opportunities for students in grades 4 through 6. Zavala also offers an after-school tutoring program for middle or high school students, which benefits former students.

Parent and Community Involvement

The teachers indicated that parents were involved at their school through school programs, such as PTA, CLT, and other volunteer programs. The parent and teachers stated that parental involvement is encouraged through administration of a beginning of the year parent survey, community walks, home visits, potluck suppers, and public rallies. Teachers said that they encourage parent involvement through sending out school newsletters, asking parents to act as home tutors, making home visits, and having a classroom open-door policy.

The parent said that Austin Interfaith and Lady of Guadalupe Church had offered several successful workshops on TAAS test scores and on leadership training. The school does not offer traditional parent training workshops any more; these workshops are now offered by Austin Interfaith and Lady of Guadalupe Church. However, parents do sometimes attend workshops with the teachers.

Professional Development

Teachers attended workshops and AISD off-campus meetings whenever funds and time were available. However, teachers preferred on-site learning/training activities, such as cross grade level meetings, teacher mentoring, peer coaching, and general in-house meetings. The principal indicated professional development was encouraged or provided for campuswide learning activities, such as Cooperative Learning seminars and the future New Jersey Writing Project.

Another method of encouraging or providing professional development was to grant a teacher's personal choice and to match the funding. The principal cited two examples of a

teacher's personal choice for professional development: the study of aerial flight and implementation of a 6th grade science laboratory. Each of these was paid for through matched funding and other assistance, as needed. The principal explained that if the requesting parties raise one-half or more of the moneys needed for the project, the principal will match that amount.

In the case of the science laboratory, the teachers obtained the funds through a National Science Foundation grant, and the principal was able to get UT's Science Department to provide classroom lab furniture (large table-desks which seat 6 to 8 students). At the time of the interviews, pre-K had just raised $1,000 toward a $2,000 project.

Teachers felt they had received administrative support in initiation of innovative instruction, such as adoption of the Dual Language System and implementation of the sixth grade science lab. However, teachers were adamant about concentrating on the Open Court series and not overshadowing it with other strategies.

Student Achievement

Teachers at Zavala believe that factors such as strong administrative support, an overarching philosophy, focused curriculum goals, continuity among grade levels, common TAAS knowledge, high teacher expectations for self and students, implementation of the after-school program, and constant student assessment contributed to improved student achievement. The principal felt that the 97% ESL certification, the two year block program where students remained with the same teacher, and the overarching philosophy that all children have the same intellect and capacity to learn were contributing factors to improved student achievement.

Teachers at Zavala said they would provide the following advice to teachers at other Title I schools on improving student achievement:

- Engage in grade level collaboration and cross grade level cooperation;
- Have focused goals and high expectation for your students;
- Know the TAAS objectives; and
- Share accountability, and make your classroom good enough for any student.

The principal offered the following advice to principals of other Title I schools:

- Be entrepreneurial (e.g., seek outside funding and donations, do business with your adopters whenever possible);
- Trust your teachers' abilities;
- Hold high expectations for teachers and students;
- Continuously assess students' achievement; and
- Discuss with teachers both their good qualities and their shortcomings.

Conclusions

COMMON THREADS

All of the Title I schools are working hard to improve student achievement; however, these four schools, in particular, are to be commended for their accomplishments. As the demographics change and the percentages of low-income students increase in these schools, the challenge for staff and administration to meet the needs of students continues to increase as well. Brown and Barrington have adapted well to the changing demographics of their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the demographics in the neighborhoods of Sanchez and Zavala have remained more constant.

In each of these schools, teachers and principals give of themselves above and beyond the call of duty. Teachers not only teach, but also work with the students after school in a volunteer capacity. Teachers and principals at these schools have a passion for their jobs; this passion enables them to meet the many challenges before them with an optimistic attitude.

While the schools share many common characteristics, there appears to be room for diversity in styles of teaching and administration. The most important factor common to these Best Practices Schools appears to be a unified philosophy and goals that are shared throughout the school. Staff and administration at these schools work together as a community to increase the achievement of their students.

Achievement of success at these schools has not occurred overnight. The process of ensuring student success is a continuos process that revolves around trying out strategies and adjusting or discarding those that do not work. Constant monitoring of student progress is absolutely necessary for this process to be successful.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Interviewees at all four schools listed a wealth of research-based and innovative instructional programs that are being used at their schools. Actual programs and strategies varied from school to school, with few being common to all. One common factor was that staff at all schools made extensive use of innovative instructional strategies and programs.
- The specific teaching strategies and special programs that a school staff chooses does not seem to be the most important factor; what seems to matter most is that there is a unified team effort to raise student achievement.
- Staff and administration at these four campuses are continuously looking for ways to improve instruction and learning.
- Training in areas that contribute to the focus, philosophy, or goals of the campus is stressed at all of these campuses.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

- Teachers at all four campuses use similar words to describe their school's climate. These words include: good, very positive, very supportive, and like a family or a team.

- Teachers feel that the principal at their school is a good leader, motivator, and facilitator. The principals are described as supportive, trusting, and open to new ideas.
- The principals at these schools have different styles and different personalities, but each is described as a strong and effective leader.
- The four schools have different philosophies, but a common goal which is improved student achievement. Staff know the philosophy of the school and work as a team to achieve their goals.
- Some of the schools have strong schoolwide coordination and collaboration, while other schools focus on the grade level teams.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

- All of these campuses have a strong campus leadership team (CLT) process. Teachers feel empowered and like they are a part of the decision-making process.
- The structure of the school day and year vary across schools. Two schools (Brown and Zavala) use the regular school calendar and two schools (Barrington and Sanchez) use the year-round calendar.
- The school day and/or year is extended at each of these schools through after-school programs and/or intersession activities.
- Some schools have adopted an actual schoolwide model (such as Accelerated Schools), while other schools have a strong campus philosophy.
- All four schools have the advantage of having many outside grants in addition to Title I funds. Applying for grants requires much time and effort on the part of the principal and teachers, but apparently staff and administration at these schools agree that grants are necessary to fund the types of programs that they need for their students.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Staff and administration at all these schools recognize the importance of parent involvement and are working to increase activities and learning for parents. Although different approaches are used to involve parents (e.g., PTA meetings, family literacy training, schoolwide celebrations, parental involvement is a priority at each of these schools.
- Some of the schools have a Parent Training Specialist who helps with communication with and training of parents.
- The parents who were interviewed indicated that parents feel comfortable coming to these schools.
- Teachers at each of these schools communicate with parents through weekly letters, open houses, parent teacher conferences, and other efforts.
- The community is involved with each of these schools through Adopt-a-School as well as through other volunteer projects and donations. This community involvement is a source of great pride and much appreciated assistance to all of the Best Practices Schools.

Professional Growth

- Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional development activities. The amount of inservice and off-campus training vary across schools. In 1994-95, staff at Zavala participated mainly in local inservices, while staff at Brown accrued over 75 hours per teacher in professional development both on and off campus.
- Teachers believe that talking to other teachers and studying educational literature in their field are an important part of professional growth.

Factors Affecting Improved Student Achievement

- Schools focused on the TAAS test in varying degrees. Some schools made the TAAS test the main focus, while others tried to teach the objectives without too much emphasis on the tests themselves.
- Time was spent aligning the curriculum with the TAAS objectives at most campuses. At schools that did not align curriculum with TAAS, curriculum already focused on TAAS objectives. The indication of this alignment is that a high percentage of students at all of these campuses passed the TAAS test.
- According to teachers and principals at each school, it is extremely important to monitor TAAS achievement. Based on the results of monitoring achievement, interventions are planned for students who are in need of additional instruction.
- A common goal, team work, teacher involvement in planning, lots of professional development, and being open and flexible to change were reported as factors influencing student achievement.
- High expectations and a belief in the abilities of students and teachers were common to all schools.
- Teachers who were interviewed believe that teachers must make learning fun and active for their students.

Advice to Title I Teachers

- Be positive and expect 100% from your students.
- All students should be treated as gifted learners.
- Treat each child as you would want your own child treated.
- Work as a unified team with a common philosophy and goals.
- Work closely with other teachers and with parents.

Advice to Title I Principals

- Choose a model for restructuring, and believe in it. The school needs to be unified with a common philosophy and goals.
- Have high standards for teachers and students.
- Monitor student achievement, and use data wisely.
- Give teachers professional freedom, trust, and encouragement.
- Offer lots of professional development and encourage teacher initiative.
- Focus campuswide efforts on TAAS skills.

SUMMARY

While each of the Best Practices Schools is unique, many of the principles and philosophies that guide the campuses are similar. Also, strong leadership is evident at each of these schools. The principals demonstrate a deep commitment to the students and teachers at their campuses. Teachers at each of the schools acknowledged and praised the support and encouragement given to school staff by their principals.

Although the philosophy used to govern each of these campuses differs somewhat, each school has a campus-wide philosophy that teachers are invested in because they have helped to develop the philosophy. Teachers play a strong role in the success of the campus. If improvement in student achievement is to be attained, the teachers must be enthusiastic participants in the process. Ongoing teacher training is essential to empower teachers with the knowledge and confidence that they need to enhance student learning. Teachers at the Best Practices Schools stressed the importance of a schoolwide team, as well as a grade-level team approach to teaching.

Teachers and parents at these schools believe that a positive school climate is important in improving student learning. Expectations are high for teachers and for students at these schools; however, a positive school climate helps relieve stress and results in happier students, teachers, and parents.

Many different teaching strategies and special programs have been implemented at the Best Practices Schools. Professional development was described by teachers and principals as necessary for the success of these programs and strategies. The faculty at each of the schools seemed receptive to new ideas, while they also believed in retaining programs that had been successful at their campuses or in their classrooms.

The type of school calendar used by the schools varied, indicating that improvement in student achievement can occur with either type of school calendar. Two of the schools, Barrington and Sanchez, use the year-round calendar, while Brown and Zavala use the traditional calendar. It appears that the commitment of administration, staff, and community at these schools results in increased student achievement, regardless of the type of school calendar. School administration at these schools is responsive to the communities that they serve in regard to the decision about type of school calendar used.

Because TAAS is the Statewide assessment instrument used to evaluate students in grade 3 and above, it is a very important factor to be considered by all schools. Staff and administration at the Best Practices schools took different approaches to TAAS preparation. Barrington's curriculum was completely redesigned to align with TAAS objectives. Teachers at Barrington felt that their new curriculum was a very valuable tool for teaching students all that they need to know. The TAAS objectives were stressed in varying degrees at the other campuses. However, principals and teachers across all Best Practices Schools agreed that constant monitoring of student progress is necessary to evaluate their efforts and to identify students who need additional assistance.

There does not seem to be a single formula for a successful school. However, it is clear that administration, staff, students, parents, and community are all integral parts of the

process. Teachers and principals must be committed to a common goal of improving student learning by using whichever methods are most appropriate for their students. Parents are an important part of the process and must be involved as well. Staff at the Best Practices Schools successfully use many different approaches to actively involve parents in their child's education. Community support is a very valuable asset to the schools; community involvement provides financial assistance and volunteer support. All of these components in varying degrees can add up to a successful school; however, in the majority of the Best Practices Schools each of these components is present in a high degree.

The unifying factor across the key components is a sense of community in the school. A sense of community appears to be essential for school effectiveness. As described by Rossi and Stringfield, (as cited in the TEA report Case Studies of Successful Campuses: Responses to a High Stakes Accountability System, 1996), the key elements which exemplify community within schools are:

- Shared Vision
- Shared Sense of Purpose
- Shared Values
- Incorporation of Diversity
- Communication
- Participation
- Caring
- Trust
- Teamwork
- Respect and Recognition

Each of the Best Practices Schools illustrates these key elements which contribute to their success in improving student achievement. Developing these characteristics should be a goal for all schools.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL, TEACHER, AND PARENT SURVEYS

BEST PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE: PRINCIPAL

I. Special Programs

A. What special programs does your school use in addition to the standard curriculum (e.g., innovative or research-based)?

B. How is technology used in your school curriculum?

C. What grants or extra funding (besides Title I) does your school currently receive?

D. How are program decisions made at your campus (e.g., CLT, teacher task force)?

II. Teachers

A. What special teaching strategies and approaches are used at your school (e.g., team teaching, teacher mentoring)?

B. How do you encourage and support your teachers (e.g., resources, incentives)?

C. What kinds of professional development does your school encourage and/or provide?

III. Students

A. How do you encourage student achievement and attendance (e.g., awards and incentives)?

B. What opportunities exist for extra-curricular activities and student leadership?

IV. Parents and Community

A. Do you have strong parental involvement at your school? How do you encourage parental involvement?

B. Do you have strong community support (e.g., adopters, mentors, volunteers)? How do you encourage community support?

V. Achievement

A. To what do you attribute improved student achievement at your school?

B. What advice would you give to principals of other Title I schools in order for students at these schools to achieve similar success?

Best Practices Questionnaire: Teacher

I. Special Programs/Teaching Strategies

A. What teaching strategies or special programs do you use to enhance the standard curriculum (e.g., innovative or research-based)?

B. How do you use technology with your students?

C. How are program decisions made at your campus (e.g., CLT, teacher task force)?

II. School Climate

A. How would you describe your school climate?

B. What are factors that contribute to your school climate?

III. Parent Involvement

A. How are parents involved at your school?

B. How do you encourage parent involvement?

IV. Professional Growth

A. How do you improve your teaching skills?

B. How are teachers at your school involved in learning and trying new teaching strategies?

C. Does your school administration support initiation of innovative instructional strategies?

V. Achievement

A. What are the factors that contribute to improved student achievement at your school?

B. What advice would you give to teachers at other Title I schools on improving student achievement at their schools?

BEST PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENT

I. Personal Data

A. Do you have children attending this school?

II. Parent Involvement

A. How did you become involved with the school?

B. How does the school staff encourage parent involvement?

III. School Climate

A. How would you describe this school's atmosphere?

B. What factors do you think contribute to this atmosphere?

IV. Student Achievement

A. How does the school staff involve parents in improving student achievement and attendance?

B. How are you helping your child to achieve?

C. What training does school staff offer to help you improve your child's achievement?

Appendix B: Additional Demographic and achievement data by School

BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY

Table 9: Barrington Demographics;
1993-94 through 1995-96

Demographics	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Ethnicity			
% Hispanic	42	41	43
% African American	24	27	26
% Asian	3	4	4
% Native American	1	-	1
% Anglo/Other	30	29	26
% Low Income	72	71	74
% LEP	15	17	16
% At Risk	31	32	32
% Special Education	8	11	10

Note. Percentages are rounded; less than 1% is indicated by a dash (-).

Table 10: Student Achievement at Barrington;
1993-94 through 1994-95

Subject	1993-94 % Passing	1994-95 % Passing
Reading	78.5	73.8
Writing	75.5	89.6
Mathematics	66.7	68.5
All Tests Taken	61.4	61.4

T.A. Brown Elementary

Table 11: T.A. Brown Elementary Demographics; 1993-94 through 1995-96

Demographics	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Ethnicity			
% Hispanic	63	70	73
% African American	19	19	16
% Asian	2	1	1
% Native American	-	-	-
% Anglo/Other	15	11	10
% Low Income	89	90	92
% LEP	34	36	42
% At Risk	47	52	50
% Special Education	21	19	17

Note. Percentages are rounded; less than 1% is indicated by a dash (-).

Table 12: Student Achievement at T.A. Brown; 1993-94 through 1994-95

Subject	1993-94 % Passing	1994-95 % Passing
Reading	65.2	71.3
Writing	61.3	87.1
Mathematics	45.6	70.1
All Tests Taken	45.1	59.1

SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Table 13: Demographics for Sanchez Elementary; 1993-94 through 1995-96

Demographics	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Ethnicity			
% Hispanic	97	96	96
% African American	2	1	1
% Asian	-	-	-
% Native American	-	-	-
% Anglo/Other	2	3	3
% Low Income	89	91	88
% LEP	23	25	27
% At Risk	46	45	41
% Special Education	15	18	17

Note. Percentages are rounded; less than 1% is indicated by a dash (-).

Table 14: Student Achievement at Sanchez; 1993-94 and 1994-95

Subject	1993-94 % Passing	1994-95 % Passing
Reading	58.7	75.2
Writing	82.4	82.9
Mathematics	45.4	58.3
All Tests Taken	39.0	56.1

ZAVALA ELEMENTARY

Table 15: Demographics for Zavala Elementary; 1993-94 through 1995-96

Demographics	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Ethnicity			
% Hispanic	83	85	86
% African American	14	14	13
% Asian	-	-	-
% Native American	-	-	-
% Anglo/Other	3	1	1
% Low Income	92	92	92
% LEP	26	27	27
% At Risk	45	36	38
% Special Education	13	12	11

Note. Percentages are rounded; less than 1% is indicated by a dash (-).

Table 16: Student Achievement at Zavala; 1993-94 and 1994-95

Subject	1993-94 % Passing	1994-95 % Passing
Reading	77.6	83.2
Writing	71.9	83.9
Mathematics	67.9	68.1
All Tests Taken	58.0	61.0

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